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A. Constitution of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO)

1. (July 17, 1968)

Stuart Hersh comments: In addition to amending and ratification of the Palestine National Covenant, the Palestine National Assembly amended and ratified the PLO Constitution, at their Fourth Session in Cairo, from July 10-17, 1968.

2. Chapter I

General Principles

Article 1. The Palestinians, in accordance with the provisions of this Constitution, form themselves into an organization to be known as the Palestine Liberation Organization.

Article 2. The Palestine Liberation Organization shall exercise its responsibilities in accordance with the principles of the National Charter, the provisions of this Constitution, and such rules, provisions and resolutions as may be issued in conformity with these principles and provisions.

Article 3. Relationships with the Organization shall be based on commitment to struggle and to national action, the different levels of the Organization, from its base up to its collective leadership, being closely linked together on a basis of the following principles: the minority shall defer to the will of the majority, confidence of the people shall be won through persuasion, the movement of Palestinian struggle shall be continued, the armed Palestinian struggle shall be supported, and every possible effort shall be made to ensure that it continues and escalates, so that the impetus of the masses towards liberation may take its course until victory is achieved. In implementation of this principle, the Executive Committee shall draft constitutions for the Organization's subsidiary bodies, due regard being paid to the circumstances of Palestinians in all places where they are concentrated, to the circumstances of the Palestinian revolution, and to the realization of the objectives of the Charter and the Constitution.

Article 4. All Palestinians are natural members of the Palestine Liberation Organization, performing their duty to liberate their country in accordance with their abilities and qualifications. The Palestinian people is the base of this Organization.

3. Chapter II

The National Assembly

Article 5. The members of the National Assembly shall be elected by the Palestinian people by direct ballot, in accordance with a system to be devised for this purpose by the Executive Committee.

Article 6.

(a) Should it be impossible to hold an election to the Assembly, the National Assembly shall continue to sit until circumstances permit of the holding of elections.

(b) If, for some reason, one or more seats in the National Assembly fall vacant, the Assembly shall appoint a member or members to fill the vacant seats.

Article 7.

(a) The National Assembly is the supreme authority of the Liberation Organization. It drafts the policy planning and programmes of the Organization.

(b) Jerusalem is the seat of the Palestine Liberation Organization.

Article 8. The National Assembly is elected for three years, and it shall be convened in regular session once every six months by its President or, should extraordinary sessions be necessary, by the President at the request of the Executive Committee, or of a quarter of its members. It shall meet in Jerusalem, Gaza, or any other place, depending on circumstances. Should the President not call such a session, the session shall convene automatically in such place and at such time as are designated in the request submitted by its members or by the Executive Committee.

Article 9. The National Assembly shall have a President's Office, consisting of the President, two Vice-Presidents, and a Secretary, elected by the National Assembly when it first meets.

Article 10. The National Assembly in ordinary session shall consider:

(a) The annual report submitted by the Executive Committee on the achievements of the Organization and its subsidiary bodies.

(b) The annual report of the National Fund and budget allocations.

(c) Proposals submitted by the Executive Committee and recommendations of Assembly Committees.

(d) Any other questions submitted to it.

Article 11. The National Assembly shall form such committees as it deems necessary to assist in the performance of its duties.

Article 12. Attendance by two-thirds of the members of the Assembly shall constitute a quorum. Decisions shall be taken by a majority vote of those present.

(b) Supervising the Organization's subsidiary bodies.

- (c) Issuing regulations and instructions, and taking decisions on the Organization's activities, provided these are not incompatible with the Charter or the Constitution.
- (d) Implementing the Organization's financial policy and drafting its budget.

In General, the Executive Committee shall assume all the responsibilities of the Liberation Organization, in accordance with the general policies and resolutions adopted by the National Assembly.

Article 17. The permanent headquarters of the Executive Committee shall be in Jerusalem. It shall also be entitled to hold its meetings in any other place it sees fit.

Article 18. The Executive Committee shall establish the following Departments:

- (a) A Military Department
- (b) A Department for Political and Information Affairs.
- (c) A Palestine National Fund Department
- (d) A Department for Research and Specialized Institutes.
- (e) A Department for Administrative Affairs.
- (f) Any other department the Committee considers necessary.

Each department shall have a Director-General and the requisite staff. The authority of each department shall be defined by special regulations drawn up by the Executive Committee.

Article 19. The Executive Committee shall establish close relations and coordinate activities between the Organization and all Arab and international Organizations, federations, and institutions which agree with its aims, or which help it in the realization of the Organization's objectives.

4. Chapter III

The Executive Committee

Article 13.

(a) All members of the Executive Committee shall be elected by the National Assembly.

(b) The Chairman of the Executive Committee shall be elected by the Committee itself.

(c) The Executive Committee shall be elected from the National Assembly.

Article 14. The Executive Committee shall consist of eleven members, including the Chairman of the Board of Directors of the Palestine National Fund.

Should vacancies occur on the Executive Committee, for any reason, when the National Assembly is not sitting, they shall be filled as follows:

(a) If the vacancies are less than a third of the total membership, they shall not be filled until the first session of the National Assembly.

(b) If the vacancies amount to a third or more of the total membership of the Executive Committee, the National Assembly shall fill them at a session convened for the purpose in not more than thirty days.

(c) Should it be impossible, for valid reasons, to convene the National Assembly in extraordinary session, vacancies arising in either of the above cases shall be filled by the Executive Committee, the Assembly's Bureau and such members of the Assembly as are able to attend, at a joint assembly formed for this purpose. The new members shall be chosen by majority vote of those present.

Article 15. The Executive Committee is the highest executive authority of the Organization. It shall remain in permanent session, its members devoting themselves exclusively to their work. It shall be responsible for executing the policy, programmes and planning approved by the National Assembly, to which it shall be responsible, collectively and individually.

Article 16. The Executive Committee shall assume responsibility for:

(a) Representing the Palestinian people.

(b) Supervising the Organization's subsidiary bodies.

(c) Issuing regulations and instructions, and taking decisions on the Organization's activities, provided these are not incompatible with the Charter or the Constitution.

(d) Implementing the Organization's financial policy and drafting its budget.

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Article 20. The Executive Committee shall continue to exercise its prerogatives as long as it enjoys the confidence of the National Assembly. The Executive Committee shall submit its resignation to the new National Assembly at its first session. It is subject to re-election.

Article 21. Attendance of two thirds of its members shall constitute a quorum, and its resolutions shall be adopted by a majority vote of those present.

5. Chapter IV

General Rules

Article 22. The Palestine Liberation Organization shall form an army of Palestinians, to be known as the Palestine Liberation Army, with an independent command which shall operate under the supervision of the Executive Committee, and carry out its instructions and decisions, both general and particular. Its national duty is to become the vanguard in the battle for the liberation of Palestine.

Article 23. The Executive Committee shall make every effort to enroll Palestinians in Arab military colleges and institutes for military training., to mobilize the potentials and resources of the Palestinians, and to prepare them for the battle of liberation.

Article 24. A fund, to be known as the Palestine National Fund, shall be established to finance the activities of the Organization, which fund shall be administered by a board of directors to be formed in accordance with special regulations for the fund issued by the National Assembly.

Article 25. The Funds sources of revenue shall be:

- (a) an impost on Palestinians imposed and collected in accordance with a special system.
- (b) Financial assistance provided by Arab governments and the Arab nations.
- (c) The sale of "liberation stamps" which the Arab states will issue for use in postal and other transactions.
- (d) Contributions and donations.
- (e) Arab loans and aid from Arab countries and friendly peoples.
- (f) Any other sources of revenue approved by the Assembly.

Article 26. Committees to be known as 'Committees for the Support of Palestine' shall be formed in Arab countries to collect contributions and support the organization in its national endeavors.

Article 27. The level at which the Palestinian people is represented in Arab organizations and conferences shall be determined by the Executive Committee. The Executive Committee shall appoint a representative for Palestine to the League of Arab States.

Article 28. The Executive Committee shall be entitled to make such regulations as are necessary for the implementation of the provisions of this constitution.

Article 29. The Organization's National Assembly shall be empowered to amend, alter, or add to this constitution by a two thirds majority of its members.

6. Chapter V

Transitional Provisions

Article 30. On July 10, 1968, the National Assembly convened in Cairo shall replace the former Provisional National Assembly of the Palestine Liberation Organization and exercise all the prerogatives allotted to it by this Constitution.

Article 31. The National Assembly shall sit for two years as from July 10, 1968. Should it prove impossible to hold elections for its successor, it shall meet and decide either to extend its term for another period or to form a new Assembly in such a manner as it may approve.

Article 32. The National Assembly alone is entitled to co-opt new members from time to time, as it sees fit, should this be desirable in view of the requirements of the battle for liberation and the need to strengthen national unity, in conformity with the provisions of the National Charter, in accordance with regulations to be drafted by the Executive Committee in the coming session.